

COUNTRY DATA: JORDAN : Information from the CIA World Factbook

INTRODUCTION

Following world war 1 and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the UK received a mandate to govern much of the Middle East. Britain separated out a semi-autonomous region of Transjordan from Palestine in the early 1920's, and the area gained its independence in 1946; it adopted the name of Jordan in 1950. The country's long-time ruler was King HUSSEIN (1953-99). A pragmatic leader, he successfully navigated competing pressures from major powers (US, USSR, and UK), various Arab states, Israel, and a large internal Palestinian population. Jordan lost the West Bank to Israel in the 1967 war and barely managed to defeat Palestinian rebels who attempted to overthrow the monarchy in 1970. King HUSSEIN in 1988 permanently relinquished Jordanian claims to the West Bank. In 1989, he reinstituted parliamentary elections and initiated a gradual political liberalization; political parties were legalized in 1992. In 1994, he signed a peace treaty with Israel. King ABDULLAH II, the son of King HUSSEIN, assumed the throne following his father's death in February 1999. Since, then he had consolidated the power and undertaken an aggressive economic reform program. Jordan acceded to the World Trade Organization in 2000, and began to participate in the European Free Trade Organization in 2001. In 2003, Jordan staunchly supported the Coalition ouster of Saddam in Iraq and following the outbreak of insurgent violence in Iraq, absorbed thousands of displaced Iraqis. Municipal elections were held in July 2007 under a system in which 20% of seats in all municipal councils were reserved by quota for women. Parliamentary elections were held in November 2010 and saw independent pro-government candidates win the vast majority of seats.

GEOGRAPHY

Location	Middle East, northwest of Saudi Arabia
Area	total: 89,324 sq km Land: 88,802 sq km Water: 540 sq km country comparison to the world: 111
Climate	mostly arid desert; rainy season in west (November to April)
Natural Resources	phosphates, potash, shale oil
Total Renewable Water Resources	0.9 cu km (1997)
Freshwater Withdrawal	total: 1.01 cu km/yr Per capita: 177 cu m/yr (2000)
Natural Hazards	droughts; periodic earthquakes
Environmental	limited natural fresh water resources; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; desertification

Issues	
PEOPLE	
Population	6,407,085 (July 2010 est.) Country comparison to the world: 102
Ethnic Groups	Arab 98%< Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%
Religions	Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6% (majority Greek Orthodox, but some Greek and Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations), other 2% (several small Shia Muslim and Druze populations) (2001 est.)
Languages	Arabic (official), English widely understood among upper and middle classes
Literacy Rate	total population: 89.9% male: 95.1% Female: 84.7% (2003 est.)
Major Infectious Diseases	
GOVERNMENT	
Type	constitutional monarchy
Independence	25 May 1946 (from the League of Nations mandate under British administration)
Constitution	1 January 1952; amended many times
Legal System	based on Islamic law and French codes; judicial review of legislative acts in a specially provided High Tribunal; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
ECONOMY	
Agricultural Products	citrus, tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, strawberries, stone fruits; sheep, poultry, dairy
Industries	clothing, fertilizers, potash, phosphate mining, pharmaceuticals, petroleum refining, cement, inorganic chemicals, light manufacturing, tourism
Import commodities	crude oil, machinery, transport equipment, iron, cereals
Import Partners	Saudi Arabia 17.3%, China 10.95%, US 6.94%, Germany 6.29%, Egypt 6.1% (2009)
Export Commodities	clothing, fertilizers, potash, phosphates, vegetables, pharmaceuticals
Export Partners	US 17.13%, Iraq 17%, India 13.59%, Saudi Arabia 10.56%, Syria 4.18%, UAE 4.09%
Per Capita GDP	\$5,300 (2010 est.)

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Population below poverty line	14.2% (2002)

*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.